



EERIE

A WARREN MAGAZINE
PDC

60¢

BEST STORIES EVER!



**1971
ANNUAL**
FEATURING FANTASTIC
SELECTIONS OF THE
GREATEST
TERROR TALES
FROM OUR EARLY
MACABRE ISSUES!



THIS IS THE WORLD OF EERIE!!

A WORLD OF WEREWOLVES, VAMPIRES, AND CREATURES THAT HAUNT THE DARKNESS... A WORLD OF SUSPENSE AND FRIGHT... A WORLD BROUGHT TO LIFE BY GREAT ARTISTS AND WRITERS... THIS IS *MY* WORLD... MAKE IT *YOURS* WITH THIS NERVE-NUMBING

2nd ANNUAL COLLECTION OF OUR BEST!!





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EERIE

1971 ANNUAL

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PROLOGUE-
SOMEWHERE
IN THE CITY,
A DOORBELL
SOUNDS...

NEVER FAILS! WHENEVER
I START WASHING
MY HAIR...

WHO IS IT?

TELEGRAM!

COULDN'T
YOU HAVE JUST
SLID IT UNDER
THE DOOR?

HAS TO
BE SIGNED
FOR...

OH, FOR
HEAVENS SAKE!
NOW WHERE DO
I HAVE TO...



TIME TO HACK YOUR WAY
TO ANOTHER SLICE OF HORROR,
MERRY MANIACS... STEP
CLOSE TO THE GRINDSTONE AS
I SHARPEN THE SHIVERS AND
INTRODUCE YOU TO THE...

HATCHET MAN

Gene
Colan



THAT MANIAC'S STILL ON THE LOOSE! CHOPPED A WOMAN TO BITS LAST NIGHT...ONLY A FEW BLOCKS FROM HERE!

THIS IS THE ONLY SHIRT I CAN WEAR TO WORK? I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO IRON SOME!

DON'T BOTHER ME, HARVEY... POLICE THINK HE'S SOME KINDA SPLIT PERSONALITY NUT, ALWAYS LEAVING NOTES IN BLOOD SAYING "HARRY DID IT..."

DIDN'T SEW ANY BUTTONS ON HERE LIKE YOU SAID YOU WOULD...

THAT WOMAN'S HUSBAND WORKED AT NIGHT...LIKE YOU, HARVEY! SAME THING COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO ME!

FORGOT TO MAKE SANDWICHES AGAIN, PHYLLIS... DON'T KNOW WHY I BOTHER CARRY A LUNCH PAIL!

G'NIGHT, PHYLLIS!

WHY COULDN'T YOU HAVE A DECENT JOB LIKE YOUR BROTHER IN SEATTLE, INSTEAD OF BEING JUST A WATCHMAN? THEN I MIGHT BE SAFE FROM MANIACS LIKE THIS!

TEN YEARS OF THIS! TEN YEARS! WISH SOMEONE WOULD TAKE A HATCHET TO THAT WOMAN!

WHY NOT? WHY SHOULDN'T THE MANIAC KILL HER? IT WOULDN'T BE HARD AT ALL TO ARRANGE... NOT AT ALL!

NOBODY CHECKS ON ME HERE...ONCE I PUNCH IN, I COULD LEAVE WITHOUT BEING NOTICED...PEOPLE'D THINK I WAS MAKING MY ROUNDS!

"NEWSPAPERS GIVE YOU ALL THE DETAILS ABOUT HOW HE WORKS..."

JUST THE GLOVES, SIR? LIKE THEM GIFT WRAPPED?

"POLICE NEVER SUSPECT IT WASN'T HIM!"

A FINE HATCHET, SIR... YOU'LL GET A LOT GOOD USE OUT OF IT!

I'LL BE RID OF PHYLLIS AND THE HATCHET KILLER'LL BE BLAMED! PERFECT!

HARVEY? THAT YOU? WHY AREN'T YOU AT WORK?

YES, DEAR... IT'S ONLY ME...



UGH!
ONE
REALLY
DOES IT...
BUT I BET-
TER GIVE HER
A FEW MORE
JUST TO MAKE IT
LOOK GOOD!
NOW
THE
WRITING
ON THE
WALL...
THEN OUT OF
HERE BEFORE
THE NEIGHBORS
BREAK IN!

SO
MUCH FOR
THIS! AS FOR
THE GLOVES...

PART
OF MY
DUTIES ARE TO
CHECK ON THE FUR-
NACE ANYWAY... MA!
LOOKS LIKE THE
HATCHET MANIAC'S
GONNA GET CREDIT
FOR ONE HE NEVER
DREAMED ABOUT! THEY
CAN NEVER PIN IT ON ME!

AH! THEY'VE FOUND HER! NOW TO PLAY THE
BEREAVED HUSBAND...



LAST
NIGHT
SOMEONE GOT
IN HERE...CARVED
YOUR WIFE UP
WITH A **HATCHET!**

OH, LORD! IT
MUST HAVE BEEN
THAT **MANIAC!** THAT HATCHET
KILLER FROM THE NEWSPAPER...



THAT'S
HOW WE FIGURE IT, MR.
WHITTAKER... THE MANIAC DID IT...
SAME ONE THAT'S CHOPPED UP
ALL THE OTHERS...



MY GOD! WHAT'S GOING
ON HERE? YOU
HARVEY
WHITTAKER?



**YOU! YOU'RE
THE HATCHET KILLER,
WHITTAKER!**

Y-YOU'RE
CRAZY...I'M NOT...



WE FOUND THESE HIDDEN IN A SUITCASE IN *YOUR* CLOSET... BLOOD-STAINS CHECK OUT WITH SEVERAL OF THE VICTIMS...

I-IMPOSSIBLE! I GOT RID OF THEM--I...*NO!*

SOMETHING YOU WANT TO TELL US, MR. WHITTAKER?

I-I KILLED... PHYLLIS! B-BUT THE OTHERS...

SOMEONE ELSE DID THAT... THE MANIAC... HATCHET KILLER... SOMEONE ELSE DID THAT...

ALL THOSE WOMEN...SOME ONE ELSE DID IT...*HARRY!* THAT'S THE ONE! *HARRY!* THE KILLER ...MANIAC... *HE DID IT!*

SHOULD BE STOPPED...BEFORE HE KILLS MORE! MORE WOMEN... *HACKED...CHOPPED* LIKES TO KILL... *KILL THEM ALL!* ... NOT AFRAID...

NOT LIKE *HARVEY WHITTAKER!* AFRAID OF PHYLLIS ... I'LL KILL 'EM ALL! SHOW THAT PIPSQUEAK HOW IT SHOULD BE DONE! ME! *HARRY! I'LL KILL 'EM ALL!*

HARVEY TRIED TO WRITE ON THE WALL... GIVE ME AWAY...BUT I SHOWED HIM... SHOWED HIM *HOW...* KILL 'EM ALL! KILL 'EM ALL!

AWRIGHT... TAKE HIM AWAY!

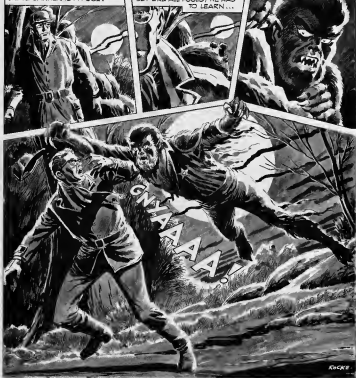
POOR HARVEY! ONE HALF HIS BRAIN DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE OTHER WAS DOING... HIS PERSONALITY WAS MORE SPLIT UP THAN HIS VICTIMS! NOW, YOU'D BETTER *HARRY* ON TO THE NEXT SCREAM STORY!



NO ONE DESERVES DEATH MORE THAN A FOOL... AND FOR ALL HIS EDUCATION AND FANCY DESIRES, BRUCE DARNER IS A FOOL!

BLUNDERING AROUND THESE WOODS WHEN HE KNOWS A WEREWOLF IS ON THE LOOSE! BUT LIKE ALL FOOLS, HE HAS TO LEARN...

... AND I'M THE ONE TO TEACH HIM!!



LOOKS LIKE WE'RE OFF TO A HOWLING START, FIENDISH FANS, BUT YOU'D BEST PROCEED WITH CAUTION INTO THIS BIT OF LYCANTHROPIC LORE, OR YOU MAY WIND UP AS...

WOLF BAIT!





ALL TOO SOON, IT'S OVER. MOST KILLS ARE A MATTER OF INSTINCT AND NEED, BUT BRUCE DARNER WAS A PLEASURE, AND I CRY MY SATISFACTION TO THE NIGHT SKY...



THE ALREADY BROKEN DOOR GIVES ME NO TROUBLE, BUT I CANNOT HOLD BACK AN ANIMAL SNARL THAT RIPS FROM MY THROAT...

AS I SUSPECTED, SHE'S WAITING AT HIS PLACE... STUPIDLY WAITING FOR A MAN WHO'LL NEVER RETURN! TEARS STILL GLISTENING ON HER CHEEKS AS WHEN I LAST SAW HER...



YOU?
NOT
YOU...

THE SHREDDER RAG THAT WAS ONCE A SHIRT, BEFORE MY BEASTIAL PLUNGE THROUGH BRUSH AND THICKET, MAKES MY IDENTITY CLEAR TO HER, BUT IT NO LONGER MATTERS. HER SHRIEKING INCENSES ME, AND MOVING FOR THE KILL, I THINK BACK TO A TIME WHEN MY PRESENCE BROUGHT A FAR, DIFFERENT REACTION...



THAO, PLEASE... THIS ISN'T RIGHT! BRUCE IS COMING BACK TODAY, IT ISN'T FAIR TO HIM!

YOU DON'T NEED HIM, WILMA... A CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR! YOU NEED A REAL MAN... LIKE ME!

BRUCE AND I ARE **ENGAGED** THAO! I SHOULD NEVER HAVE GOTTEN INVOLVED WITH YOU... I SHOULD HAVE... I... I JUST DON'T **KNOW!**

ALL RIGHT! SEE YOUR COLLEGE BOY... MAKE UP YOUR OWN MIND! THAT BOOKWORM'LL SEND YOU RUNNING STRAIGHT BACK TO ME!

THINGS WERE STARTING TO FALL APART. THE FULL MOON KILLINGS HAD THE TOWN UP IN ARMS, WILMA WAS STARTING TO HAVE CONSCIENCE PROBLEMS, THEN THAT PUNK HAD TO SHOW UP...

WILMA...

OH, BRUCE, IF ONLY IT COULD'VE BEEN SOMETHING HAPPIER TO BRING YOU BACK!

YOU SHOULD'VE STAYED AT THE UNIVERSITY, PROFESSOR... WITH A KILLER RAMPAGING AROUND HERE, YOU MIGHT NOT BE SAFE!

MY FATHER WAS ONE OF THE VICTIMS, SHERIFF! I INTEND TO FIND OUT WHO OR WHAT DID IT... IT SEEMS **YOU'RE** NOT HAVING MUCH LUCK!

I'VE ORGANIZED A CITIZENS' GUARD TO CONSTANTLY COMB THE AREA... THEY DON'T NEED SOME COLLEGE SMART ALECK GETTING IN THEIR WAY!

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT ME OR MY IDEAS, SHERIFF... I'M GOING TO **BE** IN THE WAY UNTIL SOMETHING'S DONE ABOUT THIS!

... BUT I
COULDN'T
BE
BOTHERED
ABOUT
DARNER'S
MEDDLING...
THERE
WERE
MORE
IMPORTANT
MATTERS
AT HAND!

YAAAAHHHHHHH

WHAT KIND OF
ANIMAL WOULD MUTILATE A
PERSON LIKE THAT, THAD? THIS ISN'T
BEAR COUNTRY...

THIS
SATISFY YOU, DARNER?
YOU WANTED TO FIND OUT FIRST
HAND WHAT WAS GOING ON...
NOT LIKE LIFE AT THE
UNIVERSITY, BH?

L-LORD! I
NEVER
DREAMED
IT WOULD BE
THIS BAD...

I'VE HEARD
SOME TALK THAT
IT MIGHT BE A
WEREWOLF...

THIS IS
NO TIME TO MAKE
JOKES, SHERIFF!
SOMETHING **MUST**
BE DONE! **WHATEVER**
IT IS, THE BEAST
MUST BE STOPPED!

YOU
TALK A LOT,
PROFESSOR! IF YOU
WERE HALF A MAN,
YOU'D GET A RIFLE
AND PUT **YOUR** LIFE ON
THE LINE TRACKING THAT
THING LIKE SOME OF
THE OTHERS!

WELL...?

I...I'M
SORRY...
IT'S NOT THE
KIND OF THING I
CAN DO! I'LL HAVE
TO WORK IN MY OWN
WAY...

AND SOON ENOUGH I FOUND OUT WHAT THAT WAY WAS...

WHAT'S ALL THIS CHEMISTRY SET FOOLISHNESS SUPPOSE TO MEAN, DARNER? WHAT GOOD'LL ALL THAT STUFF DO?

MY HOPE IS IT WON'T DO GOOD, BUT **BAD... IT'S POISON!** AS I'VE MIXED IT, DEADLY ENOUGH TO BRING DOWN **ANY** ANIMAL...

I INTEND TO POSITION THESE ALL AROUND THE AREA WHERE THE BEAST HAS STRUCK! IT'S BOUND TO GO FOR ONE OF THEM!

DARNER, I MAY NOT HAVE YOUR FANCY EDUCATION, BUT I KNOW A FOOL THING WHEN I SEE IT...



... **THIS** IS THE ONLY WAY TO GET WHAT WE'RE AFTER! AND IF YOU WEREN'T A GUTLESS WONDER, YOU'D REALIZE IT!

I REALIZE NO ONE'S DONE SO WELL WITH IT UP TILL NOW!



MAYBE YOU'LL HAVE A LITTLE MORE RESPECT FOR WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO **AFTER** MY METHOD'S HAD A CHANCE!

I WOULDN'T COUNT ON IT, MISTER DARNER!



SURELY NO ANIMAL WOULD IGNORE THAT MEAT... UNLESS... IT REALLY WAS A... A W-WEREWOLF!

THE CIVILIAN GUARD HAD WORKED OUT FINE! BY KNOWING EXACTLY WHERE AND WHEN EACH OF THEM WAS ON DUTY, FINDING A VICTIM WAS NEVER A PROBLEM... NO MORE THAN BRUCE DARNER'S FOOLISH PLAYING WITH POISON!

FOUND HIM RIGHT HERE, PROFESSOR... **SMACK** IN THE MIDDLE OF YOUR LITTLE TRAPS! DIDN'T EVEN TOUCH THEM!

OR MY FORMULA... PERHAPS MY FORMULA WAS WRONGS...



NOW, A SMART MAN MIGHT HAVE JUST GIVEN UP, BUT NOT DARNER... NOT A FOOL LIKE HIM...

LOOKS LIKE YOUR RANCE'S GIVEN YOU UP FOR HIS CHEMISTRY SET, WILMA...

IT'S BECOME LIKE AN OBSESSION TO HIM! HE KEEPS EXPERIMENTING WITH FORMULA AFTER FORMULA! HARDLY EVEN SPEAKS TO ME... BUT AT LEAST IT'S GIVEN ME TIME TO THINK THINGS OVER AND...

IT'S TIME YOU DECIDED TO DITCH THAT COLLEGE BOY! YOU WON'T CATCH ME NEGLECTING YOU LIKE THAT...

WAIT, THAD... YOU MUST'N'T! PLEASE! LET GO... LET...

...GO-OOOHH...

DARLING! I THINK I'VE DONE IT! THIS NEW POISON CAN...

WILMA!

BRUCE...NO! WAIT...

FORGET HIM, BABY! ALL YOU NEED IS ME!

GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME! YOU'RE NOTHING BUT AN ANIMAL, THAD! AN ANIMAL!!

RAGE
BOILED
UP
INSIDE
ME
LIKE
A
WITCH'S
CAULDRON,
AND WITH
IT, THE
URGE TO
KILL!

HAVING BRUCE BACK CONVINCED ME...
HE'S THE ONLY ONE I EVER WANTED!
BRUCE IS THE ONLY ONE!

TWILIGHT WAS BECOMING DARKNESS BY
THAT TIME... PISTOL IN HAND, I SMASHED
INTO DARNER'S LAB...

GONE! ONLY
ONE OTHER PLACE
HE COULD BE...
OUT WITH HIS
#@%&* POISON
TRAPS!

I RACED
TOWARD THE WOODS, AS I
HAD SO MANY OTHER NIGHTS WHEN THE
MOON WAS FULL... RACED WITH A CURIOUS CONTENTMENT,
KNOWING BRUCE DARNER WOULD NOT DIE SO EASILY AS BY MY PISTOL...



...AND I
FOUND
HIM WITH
NO
TROUBLE
AT ALL!



EVEN AS I KILLED DARNER, I FELT WILMA WOULD STILL NEVER BE MINE... NOW, AS HER EYES GROW WIDE IN HORROR AT MY CHARGING FORM, I **KNOW** THIS IS SO, THAT **THIS** IS THE ONLY WAY...



YET, I NEVER REACH HER! PAIN SUDDENLY SHOOTS THROUGH MY ENTIRE BODY, HORRIBLE, BURNING... I GASP AND CLAW FOR BREATH THAT DOES NOT COME...



GAARRGGHHH.

YOU'RE DYING, THAD... I HEARD IT ALL ON THE TAPE RECORDER, BEFORE YOU CAME IN...

WHAT... WHAT'S HAPPENING... I'M CHANGING BACK...



BRUCE'S LAST FORMULA WAS A VERY SLOW ACTING POISON... WITH A STRONG BASE OF **SILVER NITRATE**... WHEN HE SAW YOU AND I TOGETHER, HE THOUGHT I'D REALLY GIVEN HIM UP...



THE PAIN IS... UNBEARABLE... EVERY-THING GROWS DARK... CAN ONLY HEAR WILMA'S ECHOING, MOCKING WORDS...

HE **INJECTED** THE FORMULA **IN HIS OWN BODY**, THAD... BECAME LIVING **WEREWOLF BAIT**... BAIT WHICH YOU SWALLOWED!



HHWWW... I WONDER IF THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION'S HEARD ABOUT THIS... WE MAY HAVE TO GET BRUCE DARNER TAKEN OFF THE SHELVES! A LITTLE INDIGESTION'S ONE THING, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!



THE UNIVERSE IS VAST... THE FAR-FLUNG GALAXIES SPRAWL ENDLESSLY, BUT THIS VASTNESS IS NOT STATIC... EACH GALAXY MOVES WITH INFINITE SLOWNESS ON A SURE COURSE. WITHIN THEM, STARS LIVE AND DIE, EXPLODING WITH NOVA FORCE, SHRIVELING TO COLD BLACK SHELLS... PLANETS ORBIT AND TURN, PERISH AND FLOURISH... LIFE, IN UNCOUNTABLE VARIETY, IS SPAWNED AND DEVELOPED... ALL MOVING STEADILY, INALTERABLY, DRAWN BY THEIR OWN NEEDS AND PURPOSE! AS WAS THE INTERSTELLAR SPACE CRUISER FROM EARTH WHEN SCANNING SCREENS FIRST GAVE THE ALARM OF THEIR APPROACH TOWARD....

IT!



AS THE GIANT SHIP DREW CLOSE TO THE STRANGE FORM, CAPTAIN DURNARD AND EXPEDITION DIRECTOR ELLIOT BENT FORWARD, THEIR TENSE FACES BATHED IN THE SCANNING SCREEN'S GLOW...



...OF COURSE THERE'S A GOOD POSSIBILITY IT'S DEAD, CAPTAIN. CAST INTO SPACE BY AN EXPLODING PLANET... A CORPSE DRIFTING FOREVER...

EITHER WAY IT'S QUITE A FIND, EH, ELLIOT?

REMARK, SILE! THE ODDS AGAINST AN ENCOUNTER LIKE THIS ARE... **INCALCULABLE!** IN FACT, I FIND IT DISTURBING...

THAT'S WHY THE MILITARY STILL CONTROLS THESE EXPLORATION TRIPS, ELLIOT... WHATEVER *IT* IS OUT THERE, MY BOYS CAN HANDLE IT!



LEAVING THE CONTROL ROOM, BOTH MEN CONTINUED TALKING, OVER THE STEADY POWER HUM OF THE INTER-DECK LIFT...



I RATHER HATE RISKING IT'S BEING BROUGHT INTO THE SHIP, BUT...

OUR MISSIONS TO EXPLORE /AND EXAMINE... YOU CAN'T DO A COMPLETE JOB TILL THAT THING'S IN THE LABORATORY HOLD!



...UNTIL THEY REACHED THE BRIEFING ROOM WHERE A SELECTED GROUP OF MEN WAIT...

PROBABLY THE CREATURE'S DEAD, BUT PLAY IT CLOSE TO THE VEST... IF PRELIMINARY TESTS REGISTER POSITIVE, THROW AN ENERGY SHIELD AROUND IT AND GET BACK TO THE SHIP... WE'LL TAKE IT FROM THERE!



AGAINST THE DARK VELVET EMPTINESS OF INTER-GALACTIC SPACE, THE MEN WENT ABOUT THEIR TASK, SWARMING ABOUT THE STILL, FLOATING HULK...



NO SWEAT, SKIPPER! ALL TESTS **NEGATIVE!** IT'S BIG AND UGLY, BUT IT'S DEAD! STAND BY AT NUMBER 3 HATCH! WE'RE BRINGING IT ABOARD!

METHODICALLY, THE MONSTROUS FORM WAS MOVED INTO THE LABORATORY HOLD. ITS GREAT BULK STRETCHED LIFELESSLY ON THE GLEAMING METAL DECK...

DEAD OR NOT, THE SOONER I DON'T HAVE TO LOOK AT THIS THING, THE BETTER I'LL LIKE IT!

OUTER LOCK IS SEALED... YOU CAN REPRESSURIZE THE HOLD NOW... ALL READY FOR TESTING!

BACK IN THE CONTROL ROOM, CAPTAIN DURNED LOOKED UP FROM THE INTRASHIP VIEWER WITH A SMILE OF SATISFACTION...

ONCE MY BOYS ARE OUT, ELLIOT, YOU AND YOUR TECHNICIANS CAN MOVE IN... FINDING THIS MONSTER'S GOING TO BE A REAL FEATHER IN OUR CAPS ON EARTH!

PERHAPS WE SHOULD HAVE CONDUCTED A FEW MORE TESTS... WE CAN'T BE CERTAIN WHAT EFFECT ATMOSPHERE MAY HAVE...

NO ADVERSE EFFECT ON CORPSE FROM REPRESSURIZING... IT'S UGLY AS EVER!

THE MAD SCIENTISTS CAN TAKE IT FROM HERE!

THE CREWMEN TURNED AWAY FROM THE HIDEOUS FORM SPRAWLED ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOLD, LAUGHING AND JOKING, THEY CLUSTERED NEAR THE FORWARD HATCH, AWAITING THEIR RELIEF...

WE SHOULDN'T KID ABOUT ITS LOOKS... THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A VERY INTELLIGENT CREATURE!

IF YOU'RE RIGHT, IT'S A GREAT ARGUMENT FOR STUPIDITY!

GGNYAHHHHH!

VIEW SCREENS THROUGHOUT THE SHIP FLASHED A SCENE OF UNMERCIFUL DESTRUCTION AND HORRIFYING CARNAGE...

ELLIOT! IN GOD... **IT WAS DEAD!** HOW...

S-SOME KIND OF FANTASTIC CONTROL OVER ITS **METABOLISM!** MAINTAINING SOME TYPE OF SUSPENDED ANIMATION IN DEEP SPACE... THEN UNDER THE SHIP'S ATMOSPHERE... **IT REVIVED!**



CAPTAIN DURWARD'S FINGER JABBED AT THE BRIGHT RED **GENERAL ALERT** BUTTON. THE SCREAMING ALARM ECHOED THROUGHOUT THE SHIP AS HE SEIZED THE VIEWER CONTROLS...



SECURITY CONTROL!
SECURITY CONTROL!
SEAL OFF THE LABORATORY!
HOLD... **IMMEDIATELY!**
ALL HATCHES, AIR-CONDITIONING DUCTS...
SEAL IT OFF TIGHT!

TOO LATE TO HELP THOSE POOR DEVILS TRAPPED WITH THAT THING, BUT ONCE THE HOLD'S SEALED OFF WE'LL DEPRESSURIZE AND...

CAPTAIN! IT'S LOCATED THE VIEWER SYSTEM...
LOOK!



IT'S RIPPED OUT THE SYSTEM! WE CAN'T SEE WHAT IT'S DOING! WE...

SECURITY CONTROL!
CAPTAIN! THE HOLD IS SEALED OFF, BUT SOMETHING'S WRONG. **WE'VE LOST CONTROL!** ALL OUR CONNECTIONS **NO LONGER RESPOND!**



MINUTES PASSED, THEN HOURS. THE STATE OF EMERGENCY PROZE OVER INTO STALEMATE...

IT HASN'T TRIED ANYTHINGS, SIR... CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT IT'S DOING...

IT'LL DIE!
HATCHES ARE ENERGY-SEALED... IT CAN'T BREAK OUT AND IT CAN'T LAST IN THERE FOREVER... IT'LL **STARVE OR SUFFOCATE!**

SIR, YOU'RE FORGETTING ALL THE LAB EQUIPMENT! IF THAT THING'S INTELLIGENT ENOUGH TO SHORT-CIRCUIT OUR CONTROLS IT CAN...





WHAT KIND OF BEAST IS IT? NOTHING ON EARTH COULD BREAK THROUGH AN ENERGY-SEALED DOOR!

WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE, CAPTAIN! IT'S TOO POWERFUL FOR US... THE NERVE-BLASTERS AREN'T HAVING ANY EFFECT! CAPTAIN, PLEASE...

DESPERATELY, THE EXPEDITION DIRECTOR GRABBED THE AWAKED OFFICER, DRAGGING HIM DOWN THE CORRIDOR, AWAY FROM THE ON-RUSHING HORROR, AS BEHIND THEM...



AAAAAIIIEEEEE!

RUNNING FOR THEIR LIVES, THE TWO MEN CLAMBERED UPON THE LIFT, CURSING ITS REGULAR, AUTOMATICALLY CONTROLLED RATE OF CLIMB...

1-IT TOOK TIME TO CARRY THE GUARD'S BODY INTO THE HOLD! WE'D NEVER HAVE MADE IT, IF IT HADN'T DONE THAT!

EVOLUTION PLAYS STRANGE TRICKS! WHEREVER THIS THING'S FROM, BRILLIANT MIND POWER BECAME LINKED WITH ANIMAL INSTINCTS... WE'RE LUCKY THERE'S ONLY ONE

OF THEM! COLLECTIVELY, WE MAY STILL BE ABLE TO DEFEAT IT!

WE'LL DEFEAT IT ALL RIGHT! COME ON TO THE WEAPONS DECK... I'LL SHOW THAT THING!! SOME OF OUR OWN "BRUTE STRENGTH!"

HOW CAN IT BE ELLIOT? HOW CAN SOMETHING SO GROTESQUE, SO BESTIAL ACCOMPLISH WHAT IT HAS? IT CAN'T BE MORE INTELLIGENT THAN US... IT CAN'T BE!



COLLECTIVELY, WE MAY STILL BE ABLE TO DEFEAT IT!



THE BLAST CANNONS, CAPTAIN? THEY'RE DESIGNED FOR EXTERIOR USE! THAT MUCH ENERGY RELEASED INSIDE THE SHIP WILL DO A LOT OF DAMAGE...

IT'S WORTH THE RISK TO STOP THAT THING! IT KNOWS WE CAME THIS WAY, IT'LL BE UP HERE SOON... SWING THOSE CANNONS AROUND! I WANT A CROSSFIRE ON THAT CORRIDOR!

THE ORDERS WERE CARRIED OUT IMMEDIATELY. NERVOUS, PERSPIRING GUN CREWS TENSED BEHIND THEIR WEAPONS, PRAYING THE CAPTAIN WAS WRONG, PRAYING THE CREATURE OF HORROR MIGHT STRIKE SOMEWHERE, ANYWHERE, ELSE... THEN, A LARGE, TERRIBLE SHADOW FILLED THE CORRIDOR...

THIS IS IT!
GET READY...
ON MY
COMMAND...



THE SHADOW CAME FORWARD QUICKLY, UNHESITANTLY BECOMING ALL TOO SOLID REALITY... MOVING FAR FASTER THAN ANY SUCH MONSTROUS BULK SHOULD...

BLAST AFTER BLAST OF RAW ENERGY SLAMMED IN TO THE TERRIFYING JUGGERNAUT, CAUSING IT TO SHUDDER AND WINCE, BUT NOT HALTING ITS DESTRUCTIVE CHARGE...



YAHHHHHHHH!

OH, GOD! IT'S
GOING TO
KILL US ALL!



EVEN AS THE THOUGHT SCREAMED IN ELIOT'S MIND, BLACKNESS ENVELOPED HIM! LONG MOMENTS LATER, PERHAPS HOURS, TO HIS SURPRISE, THE DARKNESS CLEARED...

I-I'M ALIVE...! I DON'T
BELIEVE IT... DID
THE CANNONS...

NO! BUT THE PAIN FINALLY MADE IT RETREAT...
CARRYING OFF AS MANY
DEAD MEN AS IT COULD!
NOW I KNOW HOW TO
KILL IT!



I WANT EVERY MAN IN THE ENGINE ROOM! IN FULL PROTECTIVE GEAR! ENERGY BLASTS IN LARGE ENOUGH DOSES CAN HURT IT, THE CANNON PROVED THAT... IF WE CHANNEL FULL GENERATOR POWER TO JUST ONE CORRIDOR... WE'LL BLAST IT OUT OF EXISTENCE!

CAPTAIN...EVEN IF THAT WORKS, WE'LL BE WITHOUT POWER...STUCK HERE IN SPACE...HELPLESS!

CAPTAIN DURWARD WAS ADAMANT. THE CREW GATHERED IN THE ENGINE ROOM, THE LAST DITCH STAND AGAINST THE HORRENDOUS INVADER...

JUDGING FROM EVERY OTHER ATTACK, IT NEEDS VICTIMS... BUT IT CAN ONLY REACH US BY USING THE CORRIDOR. WHEN IT DOES, WE'VE GOT IT!

THE SUITS WILL PROTECT US FROM THE BLAST, BUT IF THIS DOESN'T WORK... IT'S GOT US!

ONCE AGAIN THE MEN WAITED. LONG TORTURING HOURS, SWEATY AND UNCOMFORTABLE IN THE TIGHT CONFINES OF THE PROTECTIVE SUITS... WAITED UNTIL IT SEEMED THEY WOULD SCREAM WITH WAITING... THEN, ALL TOO QUICKLY...

SIR! IT'S IN THE CORRIDOR... COMING FAST!

ALL GENERATORS ON FULL... NOW!

WITH A BANSHEE SCREAM THAT WOULD HAVE SHATTERED UNPROTECTED EARDRUMS, THE SHIP'S MIGHTY GENERATORS WHINED UNDER THE STRESS OF UNLEASHED POWER... WAVES OF CONCENTRATED ENERGY BOMBARDED THE NARROW CORRIDOR, MELTING METAL AND INSULATION... CREATING A WHIRLPOOL OF DEATH AROUND THE MONSTER FIGURE HOWLING IN ITS MIST...

DRAINING AND ABSORBING EVERY LAST OUNCE OF POWER IN THE THROBBING ENGINES... BUT, WHEN IT WAS OVER...

WE'VE WON! LOOK AT IT, ELLIOT, LOOK AT IT!

THE MEN REMOVED THEIR HELMETS, DARKNESS CLOSED IN ON THE SHIP AS WITHOUT POWER THE LIGHTS FADED, LEAVING ONLY THE FLUORESCENT GLOW OF THE SPACE SUITS...

HERE'S YOUR INTELLIGENT CREATURE NOW...

DUST! ASHES!
WE BEAT IT,
ELLIOT!

COST US
A LOT, CAPTAIN... WE WERE
LUCKY! LET'S GET TO
THE LABORATORY HOLD.
IT HAD ITS OWN GENER-
ATOR!



THE HATCH WAS OPEN, ELLIOT REACHED IT FIRST... AND WISHED HE NEVER HAD. SUDDENLY HE KNEW THE CREATURE HADN'T MET THE SHIP BY ACCIDENT... IT HAD BEEN DRAWN! DRAWN BY SOMETHING IT NEEDED... DRAWN BY THE LIFE ABOARD!

ELLIOT! WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHAT'S WRONG?

OH LORD! IF
ONLY WE HAD
TAKEN MORE TIME...
CHECKED MORE
CLOSELY...



CAST INTO SPACE BY A
DYING PLANET, THE
CREATURE HAD BEEN
DRAWN BY INSTINCT TO
THE NEAREST LIFE...
LIFE THAT WOULD BE
VITALLY IMPORTANT TO
IT AS ... **FOOD!**

I-IT'S HORRIBLE,
ELLIOT... BUT WHAT...
WHAT COULD
WE HAVE
DONE?



I DON'T
KNOW, CAPTAIN...
OUR BIG MIS-
TAKE WAS IN
THINKING OF A
LIVING BEING
LIKE THAT ONLY
AS IT...



THERE WAS LIGHT IN THE LABORATORY HOLD, ILLUMINATING THE FULL SCENE OF CARNAGE AND HORROR... ILLUMINATING THE TERRIFYING FIGURES THAT SHUFFLED TOWARD DURNARD AND ELLIOT... FIGURES NOT AS LARGE AS THE CREATURE JUST KILLED YET, BUT LARGE ENOUGH TO INDICATE THEIR GROWTH RATE WAS INCREDIBLY FAST!

...INSTEAD OF HER!!



PERSONALLY I THINK THE
LITTLE DEVILS ARE SORT
OF CUTE, BUT I SUPPOSE
DURNARD HAS RUN OUT
OF ENERGY FOR HAND-
LING THAT SORT OF
THING! THEIR MOTHER
CERTAINLY LEFT THEM WELL
PROVIDED FOR... AND SO
YOU DON'T FEEL LEFT
OUT, I'LL PROVIDE YOU
WITH ANOTHER SCREAM
STORY!





HEE HEE! MAY IT PLEASE THE COURT, (THAT'S YOU), AT THIS TIME I SHOULD LIKE TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOWING STORY WHICH, ESPECIALLY ON THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, WILL WILFULLY AND WITH MALICE AFORETHOUGHT, RENDER FEAR AND TERROR INTO THE HEARTS OF ALL WHO READ IT!

THE DEFENSE RESTS!



THE SMALL BUT PRETENTIOUS CIVIC HALL IS FILLED TO OVERFLOWING. LYDIA ALBRITTON, SINGING SENSATION OF THE ENGLISH THEATRE, IS ON TOUR THROUGH EUROPE AND THIS NIGHT HAS COME TO THE TINY NORTH GERMAN TOWN OF BRUDENHEIM.

MAYOR HERMAN BRUDENHEIM IS BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT MAN IN THE ENTIRE DISTRICT. OWNING ALMOST ALL THE LAND IN TOWN AND MUCH OF THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE, HE FANCIES HIMSELF QUITE THE DASHING LADIES-MAN... AND THE LOVELY LYDIA ALBRITTON HAS MORE THAN CAUGHT HIS FANCY.



IN TRUTH, ANY SUCCESS HE HAS HAD WITH THE DAUGHTERS OF THE TOWN'S FAMILIES IS DUE TO THE POWER HE WIELDS OVER THE GIRLS' FATHERS WHO, LACKING MORAL FIBRE, HAVE ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BE SUBJUGATED TO WIN HIS FAVOR.



POSSESSING ALL THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A BRILLIANT CAREER, HE NONETHELESS REMAINS BUT A MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEASANTS AND MIDDLE CLASSES WHO RESPECT HIM FOR HIS REFUSAL TO LICK THE BOOTSTRAPS OF THE MAYOR.



AT THE CLOSE OF HER ENCHANTING PERFORMANCE, LYDIA ALBRITTON IS INTRODUCED TO THE MAYOR WHO IN HIS FAWNING MANNER INVITES HER TO HIS HOME TO ATTEND A BALL HE IS GIVING IN HER HONOR.



IN THE SAME AUDIENCE, AND ENTRANCED TO NO LESS A DEGREE THAN THE MAYOR, BUT ONLY ABLE TO AFFORD STANDING ROOM, IS ANDREW PRESCOTT, BY CHOICE A POLITICAL ENGLISH EXILE, WHO HAS BEEN PRACTICING LAW IN THE TOWN FOR SEVERAL YEARS.



THIS REFUSAL HAS NOT ONLY EARNED HIM THE HATRED OF THE MAYOR AND HIS SOCIAL-CLIMBING FRIENDS, BUT HAS ALSO WON HIM A VERY DIFFICULT TIME IN COURT WHILE TRYING A CASE AND HIS LIST OF FAILURES FAR OUTWEIGHS HIS LIST OF TRIUMPHS. FOR IN THIS TOWN OF BRUDENHEIM, THE MAYOR IS ALSO JUDGE OF THE COURT.



GRACIOUSLY, SHE ACCEPTS THE INVITATION, AND AS THE MAYOR POMPPOUSLY LEADS HER TO HIS CARRIAGE, ANDREW PRESCOTT STEPS FORTH FROM THE CROWD TO EXTEND HIS COMPLIMENTS TO THE ACTRESS.



IN THE PRESENCE OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE THE MAYOR IS TOLERANT OF THIS INTRUSION, BUT IT DEVELOPS THAT THE LAWYER AND THE ACTRESS HAD KNOWN EACH OTHER IN ENGLAND AND THIS REUNION IS A DELIGHT TO BOTH.



AT THE BALL, THE MAYOR TRIES REPEATEDLY TO INGRATIATE HIMSELF TO THE GIRL, BUT FINDS HIS INTENTIONS POLITELY SPURNED BY THE ACTRESS WHO IS ONLY CONCERNED WITH ANDREW.



CONTROLLING HIS JEALOUS FURY, THE MAYOR EXTENDS THE INVITATION TO INCLUDE ANDREW WHO ACCEPTS READILY FOR HE DOES WISH TO SPEAK FURTHER WITH HIS BEAUTIFUL FRIEND, AND, TOO, IS ALSO ENJOYING IMMENSELY THE MAYOR'S AGITATION.



SO PLEASED IS LYDIA WITH THE MEETING, AND SO OBVIOUSLY RELUCTANT TO HAVE IT END, THAT THE MAYOR IS FORCED TO ASK PRESCOTT TO JOIN THEM. THE LAWYER AGREES.



DESPERATELY THE MAYOR INVITES HER TO STAY THE WEEKEND AS HIS GUEST (TO ALLOW HIM TIME TO woo her), BUT SHE REPLIES THAT SHE HAS PROMISED TO GO RIDING AND PICKNICKING WITH ANDREW.



UNKNOWN TO THEM, THEY ARE BEING WATCHED



MONSTROUSLY HUGE IN SIZE, DEVOID OF FACIAL BEAUTY, UNKEMPT AND GUTTER RUTHY, GRUNTING SOFTLY TO HIMSELF NOW AND AGAIN, THE EYES OF MOLOK-THE-BRUTE MISS NOTHING OF THE MAYOR'S ATTENTION TO THE RADIANT LYDIA.



FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT HE SEES THE LAMPS ILLUMINATE THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOMS, AND THEN WATCHES AS THE MAN AND WOMAN BEGIN THEIR INDIVIDUAL PREPARATIONS FOR SLEEP.



IN HIS ROOM, ANDREW PRESCOTT IS STUNNED TO HEAR THE SCREAMS PIERCING THE NIGHT. HE HESITATES IN DISBELIEF ONLY FOR A MOMENT THEN RUSHES TO THE BALCONY WHERE HE REALIZES THE SHRIEKS ARE FROM LYDIA'S ROOM!



AS THE GUESTS BEGIN LEAVING AND THE ACTRESS AND LAWYER ARE LED UPSTAIRS TO THEIR RESPECTIVE ROOMS, THE HUGE MAN SHAMBLES AWAY FROM THE WINDOW AND HIDES IN THE NEARBY TREES.



QUIETLY, MOLOK MOVES TO THE TRELLIS LEADING TO THE BALCONY CONNECTING THE TWO BEDROOMS AND THERE HE CLIMBS UPWARD. WITH ANIMAL GLENCE HE GAINS THE BALCONY AND ENTERS THE GIRL'S BEDCHAMBER.



LEAPING THE DIVIDER BETWEEN, HE BURSTS INTO THE NOW UNLIGHTED ROOM AND DINLY SEES THE SHADY MONSTER LOOMING OVER THE BROKEN AND BLOODED FORM OF THE ACTRESS!



TO ANDREW PRESCOTT, MORE THAN JUST THE CRUMPLED AND BLOOD-SPATTERED BODY OF A DEAR FRIEND LIES DEAD IN THE MOONLIGHT: A DREAM ONLY HOURS OLD HAS BEEN SHATTERED FOREVER. IN HORROR AND BLIND RAGE, HE ATTACKS THE REED WHO LIFTS HIM EASILY AND CASTS HIM ASIDE.



MOCHING, HE STRUGGLES TO HIS FEET JUST AS THE SERVANTS BREAK DOWN THE DOOR. THE MAYOR AND OTHER GUESTS STRIDE IN, THEIR LAMPS SHOWING PRESCOTT STANDING OVER THE DEAD GIRL.



THE MAYOR OTES THE LOCKED DOOR, THE NEARNESS OF THE TWO ROOMS BY WAY OF THE BALCONY, AND EVEN IMPLIES THE ACTRESS WAS KILLED RESISTING THE LAWYER'S ADVANCES. IF PRESCOTT WISHES TO HAVE HIS FANTASTIC TALE BELIEVED, THE MAYOR CONTINUES, HE WILL HAVE TO USE MORE THAN mere WORDS...HE WILL HAVE TO PRODUCE EVIDENCE!



ONLY SEMI-CONSCIOUS FROM THE IMPACT AGAINST A WALL, HE IS BARELY AWARE OF THE HUGE FORM ESCAPING OVER THE BALCONY, AND HARDLY HEARS THE POUNDING AND THE SHOUTING OF VOICES OUTSIDE THE LOCKED DOOR.



FOR THE MAYOR, THIS OPPORTUNITY IS TOO GOOD TO RESIST. HE ORDERS HIS SERVANTS TO SEIZE THE LAWYER WHO, STILL SOMEWHAT DAZED, TRIES HOPELESSLY TO EXPLAIN ABOUT THE REAL MURDERER. THE MAYOR ONLY LAUGHS AT HIM.



ANGRY AND STRUGGLING, ANDREW IS TAKEN FROM THE ROOM AND CAST INTO A DUNGEON BENEATH THE HOUSE WHERE HE IS KEPT UNDER GUARD FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE NIGHT. THROUGH LONG, SLEEPLESS HOURS, HIS AGONY OF FRUSTRATION AND REMORSE ALLOWS HIM NOT A MOMENT'S PEACE.



IN THE PALE LIGHT OF EARLY MORNING HE IS ROUSED AND BROUGHT TO THE COURTHOUSE TO STAND TRIAL. NONE OF THE VILLAGERS ARE THERE AND WITH SINKING HEART HE IS SUDDENLY AWARE THAT PROBABLY NO ONE KNOWS OF HIS FLIGHT WHICH, FROM THE MAYOR'S POINT OF VIEW, IS VERY FORTUNATE INDEED.



GLANCING AROUND THE NEARLY EMPTY COURTROOM, THE LAYVER RECOGNIZES THE SIX-MAN JURY AS BEING THE MAYOR'S CLOSEST CRONIES, A GROUP HE HAD ENCOUNTERED IN COURT MANY TIMES IN THE PAST, A GROUP WHO UNFAININGLY RENDERED A VERDICT AGAINST HIM AND WHO WERE ONLY ON THE JURY WHEN THE MAYOR HIMSELF HAD A STAKE IN THE CASE.



AT EVERY POINT WHERE PRESCOTT, CONSUMED WITH FURY AND DEJECTION, RISES TO OBJECT OR DEFEND HIMSELF, THE MAYOR ASKS FOR EVIDENCE! EVIDENCE OF PERJURY, EVIDENCE OF HIS INNOCENCE, EVIDENCE OF ANOTHER'S GUILT! EVIDENCE! EVIDENCE!



SEATED IN THE JUDGE'S CHAIR, THE MAYOR SWAGGERINGLY PERMITS ANDREW THE PRIVILEGE OF DEFENDING HIMSELF, YET PRESCOTT'S PLEAS TO BE GIVEN TIME TO PREPARE HIS DEFENSE FALL ON DEAF EARS. THE TRIAL PROCEEDS.



CALLED BY THE MAYOR, WITNESS AFTER WITNESS COMES FORTH, TESTIFYING IN OUTRAGEOUS LIES HOW THEY SAW PRESCOTT MAKE IMPROPER ADVANCES AT THE BALL, HOW THEY HEARD HIM VOW TO WIN THE LADY'S AFFECTION, EVEN HEARD HIM THREATEN HER WITH VIOLENCE UNLESS SHE AGREED TO HIS WILL.



GLARING INTO THE SMIRKING EYES OF THE MAYOR, INTO THE TWITTERING, DISINTERESTED FACTS OF THE JURY, PRESCOTT KNOWS HIS POSITION IS HOPELESS. THE VERDICT IS SWIFT... GUILTY! AND THE PUNISHMENT, DEATH BY FLOGGING AND HANGING!



PRESCOTT KNOWS FROM PAST EXPERIENCE THAT NO TIME WILL BE WASTED IN CARRYING OUT THE SENTENCE. AS HE IS BEING LED AWAY TO THE EXECUTION DOCKET, THE TWISTED LAUGHTER FROM INSIDE THE COURTROOM MADDENS HIM TO THE POINT OF FRENZY! WITH BULGEONING FISTS HE OVER-POWERS THE DULL-WITTED GUARDS AND ESCAPES INTO THE WOODS!



SEVERAL NIGHTS PASS BEFORE PRESCOTT RETURNS FROM THE SAFETY OF THE FOREST AND CROSSES THE LAWN TO THE REAR OF THE MAYOR'S HOUSE.



CONCEALING BY THE TRELLIS BENEATH THE BEDROOM WINDOWS, HE FINDS SEVERAL CLEAR AND UNMISTAKABLY HUGE FOOTPRINTS. MUTTERED CURSES EMBLE IN HIS BREAST FOR HE NOW KNOWS THAT IF THE MAYOR HAD TAKEN BUT A MOMENT TO INVESTIGATE HE, PRESCOTT, WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO TRIAL.



INRAGED, HE STEALTHILY GAINS ENTRANCE TO THE HOUSE AND FINDS THE MAYOR IN HIS STUDY.



AT PISTOL-POINT, HE FORCES THE QUINERING MAYOR TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE COURTHOUSE. UPON ENTERING, THE MAYOR ALL BUT COLLAPSES, FOR IN THE JURY BOX, BOUND AND GAGGED, ARE HIS SIX COHORTS!



TREMBLING VIOLENTLY, STAMMERING APOLOGIES, WITH BEADS OF SWEAT DANCING ON HIS BROW, THE PANICKY MAYOR IS THRUST HEAVILY INTO HIS SEAT ON THE BENCH AND SECURELY TIED AND GAGGED.



IN PROPER LAWYER FASHION, PRESCOTT THEN BEGINS HIS ADDRESS. HE ASSAULTS THEM FOR THE MOCKERY THEY MAKE OF JUSTICE, AND THEIR PARASITIC WAY OF LIFE. AND HE ENUMERATES THE SOCIAL CRIMES THEY HAVE COMMITTED AGAINST THEIR FELLOW TOWNSMEN IN THEIR GREED FOR POWER AND POSITION.



MOLOK-THE-BRUTE THEY HAD CALLED HIM THEN. NOW, AFTER MANY YEARS IN A NIGHTMARISH PRISON FROM WHICH HE HAD RECENTLY ESCAPED, THEY MIGHT BETTER CALL HIM MOLOK-THE-MADMAN, WHO LIVES ONLY FOR REVENGE! THINKING THE ACTRESS IMPORTANT TO THE MAYOR, MOLOK HAD KILLED HER!



WITH A GRIM SIGN OF FINALITY, THE LAWYER STEPS FROM THE ROOM, CLOSES AND LOCKS THE DOOR AND THROWS AWAY THE KEY. CROSSING THE MOONLIT FIELD BEHIND THE COURTHOUSE, HE DOESN'T EVEN TURN HIS HEAD AT THE SOUNDS OF VIOLENT SCREAMS AND THUNDEROUS CARNAGE AS HE MAKES HIS WAY TO THE SEA AND A WAITING BOAT.



HE REMINDS THEM OF ONE INJUSTICE IN PARTICULAR, ONE OF PRESCOTT'S FIRST CASES IN BRUJOENHEIM, A CASE HE HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN CONCERNING A MAN CALLED MOLOK WHO THIS SAME GROUP HAD FOUND GUILTY OF MURDERING A YOUNG GIRL. AND MOLOK'S ONLY DEFENSE WAS THAT HE WAS INNOCENT AND ONLY GUILTY OF SEEING THE MAYOR HIMSELF COMMIT THE DEED.



FOR PRESCOTT TO REST HIS CASE AND TO ESTABLISH HIS OWN INNOCENCE, THE COURT MUST NOW AT LONG LAST "PERMIT" HIM TO PRESENT HIS EVIDENCE! SO SAYING, HE OPENS THE DOOR AND USHERS THE LUSTY, EAGER MOLOK INTO THEIR PRESENCE! STIFLED MOANS, CRYING AND MUFFLED SHRIEKS OF TERROR FROM THE SEVEN CAPTIVES ONLY INCITE THE MONSTER AS HE LUMBERS TOWARD THEM.



HEEHEE!
OH, REVENGE CAN BE SO SWEET!
PRESCOTT'S WORDS MAY HAVE MADE THEM FEEL SORRY FOR THEIR MISDEEDS, BUT I CAN **GUARANTEE** THAT WHEN MOLOK, FINISHED WITH THEM, THEY **REALLY** FELT BAD! IN FACT, THEY WERE ALL **BROKE-UP** ABOUT IT! LIKE THEY SAY, FRIENDS, ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS! HEHEHEHEHE!





SEARCHING FOR ANOTHER GORY-STORY? FEAR FANS? LET ME BE YOUR GADGOL GUIDE INTO THE UNCHARTED WATERS OF THE WEIRD AS WE GO EXPLORING FOR EXCITEMENT AND END UP ON THE ...

ISLAND AT WORLD'S END!



The
we
are
ing to
thats
entire
petfully
Pope Pops
stewport in
tombstone
for the way
Island of the
nation! on.

'LOG OF THE CELTIC'...

WHALE OUT OF NEW BEDFORD:

March 3, 1894...
Driven hundreds of miles
south of shipping lanes
by storm while rounding
cape... Uncharted waters
desolate and ice-bound...
We've encountered someone
whose fate's been far
worse.....

"HE WAS A LARGE MAN, AND STRONG... TO HAVE BEEN LESS, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD..."

AIN'T NATURAL... ADRIPT
IN AN OPEN BOAT IN
WATERS LIKE THESE!



"MARCH 6-- OUR PASSENGER IS RECOVERING... TODAY FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE COULD ANSWER QUESTIONS..."

NAME'S STURGIS, SIR! FIRST
MATE OF THE "PRODIGAL"...
"LEAST I WAS! WE WERE TWO
YEARS OUT OF SALEM WHEN
THE TROUBLE HIT... WORST
SORT OF TROUBLE ON A
WHALING SHIP..."



"...MUTINY!"



"THE CAPTAIN WAS KILLED AND WE THREE REMAINING OFFICERS SET ADRIPT WITH A FEW SUPPLIES... I MANAGED TO SNEAK OFF MY PISTOL..."



"IN TIME WE BECAME ANIMALS... RAGING FOR SURVIVAL, THE OPEN PORT OUR JUNGLE! FOR THE OTHERS, REASON FAILED... FOR ME, THE PISTOL DIDN'T..."



"THEN BEGAN THE AWFUL DRIFTING... SLOWLY, STEADILY... *SOUTH!* SOUTH TOWARD UNKNOWN WATERS... SOUTH TOWARD ICE AND SILENCE... SOUTH TOWARD THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD!"



"BUNDLED IN THE CLOTHING OF DEAD MEN... LIVING MEAGERLY ON THEIR FOOD SHARES... I DRIFTED! BUT EVEN DRIFTING THINGS CAN REACH A DESTINATION... AND SO I REACHED THE ISLAND!"



"COLD, DESOLATE, LONELY... LIKE A LAST STOP BEFORE ETERNITY! NOT MUCH, BUT ALL THAT WAS LEFT ME... I BEGAN TO EXPLORE..."



"MY SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF LIFE LED ME TO OTHER SIGNS... OF DEATH!"



BONES LOOKED TO HAVE BEEN GNAWED BY SOME KIND OF ANIMAL... SKULLS APPEAR... H-HUMAN?



"I'VE SEEN THE WILDEST SWAGES OF OUR WESTERN PLAINS AND THE GREAT APES OF AFRICA'S JUNGLES ... THIS WAS NEITHER... AND IT WAS BOTH! BUT THERE WAS NO TIME FOR CURIOSITY..."



"AND NO CHANCE TO USE THE PISTOL AGAIN. SHRIEKING AND SCREAMING WITH BEAST-LIKE FEROCITY, THEY CHARGED!"



"A HAIRY, OBSCENE TIDE SWEEPED OVER... MY LAST THOUGHT WAS OF THE GNAWED WHIRL BONES BENEATH MY FEET!"



"FUMES OF SULPHUR AND PRICKLES OF HEAT FORCED MY SWIRLING MIND TO CONSCIOUSNESS..."

I'M INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN...
OR IS IT A VOLCANO? THOSE
THINGS I WAS FIGHTING
MUST HAVE LEFT ME
HERE... WHY?



"MY PISTOL WAS THROWN IN WITH ME, YET I DREW LITTLE COMFORT FROM IT..."

DON'T LIKE THESE
IDOLS! MAKE THE
LEDGE LOOK
LIKE ...
A PLACE OF
SACRIFICE!



DOWN BELOW!
SOMETHING'S
STIRRING...



IMPOSSIBLE!
HOW CAN SHE...



"WHAT THE WIND CANNOT COMPREHEND, IT SOMETIMES SHUTS OUT... ONLY A MELODIC SOFT VOICE PULLED ME FROM THE BLACK BARRIER IT HAD THROWN UP..."

I WENT FORTH FOR A SACRIFICE, BUT FND INSTEAD A PRINCE!



I AM CTHYLLA, LAST OF THE GREAT ELDER RACE... HIGH PRIESTESS OF DREAD SHOGGATH!



RUINS OF AN OLD CITY... HIDDEN AWAY IN THIS MOUNTAIN...

IT WAS NOT ALWAYS SO! THE GREAT WARS... THE MIGHTY SNOWS... WE WERE DRIVEN UNDERGROUND! SOME REMAINED... DEGENERATED INTO BEASTS... THE HAIRY ONES ABOVE!



THEY ADAPTED WHILE YOUR PEOPLE DIED OUT DOWN HERE...

WHILE I LIVE, THE ELDERS MAY LIVE... LONG HAVE I PRAYED TO SHOGGATH FOR ONE TO SHARE MY DESTINY... MY THRONE... MY LIFE!



HER EYES LOCKED WITH MINE, PEERING DEEP... SUDDENLY I COULD NO LONGER SEE ANYTHING BUT HER... CTHYLLA!

... THE ELDER RACE SHALL THRIVE AGAIN!



"BUT SOMETHING DARK CLOUDED MY FEELINGS... MADE ME UNEASY..."

DEEP... COULD REACH STRAIGHT INTO HELL...

YOUR BREAD IS OF SHOGGATH, AND HEREIN HE DWELLS... FEARFUL AND MIGHTY! THE HAIRY ONES STILL SACRIFICE TO HIM...



...BUT SHOGGATH KNOWS THE CHOSEN ONES! THIS YOU MUST LEARN!

CTHYLLA! THE WELL!



"SHE DID NOT FALL... NOW COULD SHE NESTLED IN THE PALM OF THAT OBSCENITY AS WHEN FIRST I SAW HER?"

JOIN ME! DO NOT BE AFRAID... SHOW GREAT SHOGGATH HIS PRIESTESS NOW HAS A PRIEST! COME... NOW!



"AGAIN OUR EYES LOCKED, AND AGAIN--GOD FORBID-- I CRIED!"



"NOW WE TRAVELED UP... *UP!* IN THE GRIP OF THAT NEBULOUS MONSTROSITY... BUT MY THOUGHTS WERE ONLY OF THE SOFT FIGURE AT MY SIDE... MY QUEEN... MY CTHYLLA!"

SHOGGATH WAS DENIED WHEN I FOUND YOU... HE ACHES FOR FULFILLMENT...



AH! THE HAIRY ONES HAVE ANTICIPATED... THEY KNOW BETTER THAN TO DISAPPOINT HIM!





"THIS TIME NO MERCIFUL FANT OBLITERATED MY VISION! THIS TIME I SAW ALL!"

FEAST, SHOGGATH, FEAST!
REAP THE SWEETS OF
YOUR GREATNESS! FEAST,
ALL-POWERFUL GOD!

DIFFERENT AS IT
WAS, IT WAS A
HUMAN CREATURE!
HOW CAN SHE FIND
SUCH JOY!



"EVEN AS I LEAPED I KNEW IT WAS NO ACCIDENT THE MEN-CREATURES HAD PLACED ME ON THE LEDGE... LEFT ME THE PISTOL..."

I'LL BE NO PART
OF A LIFE LIKE
THIS!



"IN THE THUNDER OF THE WEAPON, THEY HAD SEEN A GLIMMER OF HOPE AGAINST SHOGGATH... EVEN AS I DESPERATELY DID!"

SHOGGATH! BRING
HIM BACK! BRING
HIM BACK TO ME!

PAK-KOW!



"BUT IT WAS NOT THE BEHEMOTH THAT FELL ..."



"I DID NOT HEAR HER SCREAM, NOR DID I LOOK BACK IN MY FRANTIC SCRAMBLE FOR FREEDOM. BEHIND ME A MOURNFUL WAIL ROSE IN PITCH TO A DREADFUL RUMBLE ..."



"FEAR DROVE MY LEGS DOWN THAT SLOPE OF ROCK AND ICE ... NOTHING BROKE MY FLIGHT!"



"WHAT HAD BEEN A RUMBLE SPLIT THROUGH THE AIR NOW LIKE AN EXPLOSION! IN HIS GRIEF AND RAGE WAS SHOGGATH BREAKING FREE OF THE CRATER? AS I REACHED THE BOAT, NO DESIRE MOVED ME TO SEE ... I PUSHED OFF PREFERRING THE SLOW FREEZING DEATH AHEAD TO THE MONSTROUS INSANITY THAT STORMED BEHIND!"



DO YOU BELIEVE, CAPTAIN? CAN THESE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED TO ME?"

I BELIEVE THE MIND OF A FREEZING, SLOWLY DYING MAN CAN MAKE ANYTHING POSSIBLE ... YOU SHOULD REST...



AFTER DAYS ADRIPT, I THOUGHT THAT TOO, BUT I KEEP SEEING HER EYES ... LOCKED DEEP IN MINE ... PROMISING A WORLD ... CYNTHIA ...



"MARCH 10--STURGIS HAS RECOVERED, YET HE PROWLS THE DECKS MOODY AND QUIET, STARRING AT THE SEA AS THOUGH LOOKING FOR SOMETHING..."

MAN, YOU'VE GOT TO GET
HOLD OF YOURSELF... YOU--

SHE BLOWS!
SHE BLOWS!



THAT'S NO WHALE'S
SPOUT! IT'S STEAM... MUST!
GETTING CLOSER!



HE'S COME
... I KNEW
HE MUST!



CTHYLLA! STURGIS... YOU
FOOL! NO!



DESPITE THE
HORROR, HE DIED
SILENTLY. LATER,
THE CREW
LIKED TO THINK
HE DID IT TO
SAVE THE
SHIP... NO
WATER... BUT
IN THE ONLY
WAY LEFT HIM,
STURGIS HAD
DONE BACK...
BACK TO CTHYLLA!



WHAT HAPPENED TO GOOD OL'
SHOGGAH? NO ONE KNOWS, HE
WAS NEVER CAUGHT... BUT IF
HE IS, YOU CAN REST ASSURED
IT WILL BE RED-HANDED!
AND YOU'LL BE RED-FACED IF
YOU MISS MY NEXT ISSUE!



GRAB YOUR RIFLES, RABID READERS. WE'RE GOING ON A HAUNTING EXPEDITION INTO TREACHEROUS TERROR-ITORY TO SEEK OUT SOME REALLY BIG GAME! YOU'LL NEED ALL YOUR NERVE AS WE PLUNGE INTO THE LAIR OF...



THE SWAMP GOD!

CROFT, THIS IS CRAZY! CHASING AROUND AFTER SOME INDIAN LEGEND!

YOU CAN'T BE SURE WHAT WE'LL FIND DOUGLAS! NOBODY'S BEEN THIS DEEP INTO THE SWAMP BEFORE... RIGHT, JOHNNY?

SOMEWHERE IN THE DISTANCE CAME THE LOW RUMBLE OF APPROACHING THUNDER. FLASHES OF HEAT LIGHTNING BRIGHTENED THE NIGHT SKY... JOHN KIMA EASED UP ON THE POLE AND LET THE DUGOUT DRIFT IN A BRIEF STRETCH OF CLEAR WATER. ALREADY HE WAS HAVING REGRETS ABOUT THE EXPEDITION...

NO WHITE MAN, MR. CROFT... FOR CENTURIES MY PEOPLE HAVE MADE THIS AREA THEIR HOME... ISOLATED AND PRIMITIVE!

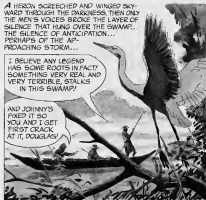
BUT YOU'RE AN EDUCATED MAN, KIMA... YOU BELIEVE THIS "SWAMP GOD" STUFF?



A HERON SCREECHED AND WINGED SKYWARD THROUGH THE DARKNESS, THEN ONLY THE MEN'S VOICES BROKE THE LAYER OF SILENCE THAT HUNG OVER THE SWAMP... THE SILENCE OF ANTICIPATION... PERHAPS OF THE APPROACHING STORM...

I BELIEVE ANY LEGEND HAS SOME ROOTS IN FACT! SOMETHING VERY REAL AND VERY TERRIBLE, STALKS IN THIS SWAMP!

AND JOHNNY'S FIXED IT SO YOU AND I GET FIRST CRACK AT IT, DOUGLAS!



EAGLES TO ELEPHANTS I'VE BAGGED THEM ALL, KIMA. NOTHING IN HERE CAN BE *THAT* UNUSUAL!

UNUSUAL ENOUGH TO LEVEL ENTIRE VILLAGES! UNUSUAL ENOUGH THAT GENERATIONS OF MY TRIBE HAVE MADE SACRIFICES TO APPEASE IT! *HUMAN SACRIFICES!*



H-HUMAN SACRIFI--COME OFF IT, KIMA! THIS DAY AND AGE! IF THERE'S MORE THAN AN OVERSIZED ALLIGATOR AROUND, I'LL EAT IT!

THIS SWAMP IS OLD, DEEP... UNTOUCHED BY TIME! PAST AND PRESENT MEAN LITTLE HERE...



I'M OF A PRIMITIVE AND DYING PEOPLE... I'VE TRIED TO CHANGE THEIR WAYS... IT WAS MY HOPE THE TWO OF YOU COULD HELP!

DON'T GET SORE, JOHNNY! DOUGLAS AND I ARE TOP HUNTERS... IF ANYONE CAN NAIL YOUR "SWAMP GOD" WE CAN!



THUNDER RESOUNDED OVERHEAD AND DROPS OF RAIN BEGAN PELTING THE THREE MEN IN THE DUGOUT...

WHAT'S UP? WHY ARE WE STOPPING?

WE CAN GO NO FURTHER... THIS IS THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE, THE KILLING GROUND OF THE SWAMP GOD!





IT COMES
FROM THERE,
BEYOND THE
TREES!

LOOKS
PEACEFUL
NOW...THIS
RAIN WON'T MAKE
WAITING EASY...

HATE TO
HAVE COME ALL
THIS WAY FOR
NOTHING--
WHAT'S THAT,
JOHNNY?

WHEN THE
SWAMP GOD'S
SACRIFICE WAS
PREPARED, A
BLAST FROM
THIS HORN WAS
SAID TO
SUMMON
HIM FORTH...




MOMENTARILY, ONLY THE SOUND OF THE
RAIN WAS AUDIBLE IN THE SWAMP, THEN
THE INDIAN GUIDE'S LIPS TOUCHED THE
OLD HORN, FILLING THE NIGHT WITH A LONG
WAIL, ECHOING LIKE THE CRIES OF A WOUNDED
ANIMAL...TORTURED AND UNEARTHLY!



DOUGLAS!
T-THERE IN THE
BOGS...



...S-SOMETHING'S
STIRRING!



THE SWAMP'S STIFLING AIR
WAS RENT BY A HUGE THUNDER-
CLAP, QUICKLY FOLLOWED BY
THE CRACKLING BRILLIANCE
OF LIGHTNING, ETCHING THE
AREA IN AN EERIE GLOW!

TYRANNOSAURUS!
KIMA WAS RIGHT...
IT'S SURVIVED TIME
NURTURED ON
H-HUMAN
SACRIFICE...

OH, MY GOD!



GOOD THING TOO! YOU MIGHT HAVE ENDED UP LIKE CROFT! BLASTED RIFLES... FINE WEAPONS FOR YEARS! HOW COULD THEY GO WRONGS NOW?

NO BULLETS, MR. DOUGLAS... I REMOVED THEM WHEN I LOADED THE DUGOUT!



YOU DID WHAT? I DON'T UNDERSTAND, WHY--KIMA! WHAT'RE YOU DOING?! NO!



AGAIN THE HIDEOUS SOUND OF THE SACRIFICIAL HORN ROSE THROUGH THE SWAMP...

KIMA! WHY? THE THING'LL HEAR IT... GIVE ME A HAND! HELP ME OUT OF HERE! THAT MONSTER'S COMING... PLEASE!!



HOPELESSLY DOUGLAS CLAWED AND SCRAPED AT THE MUD AND GRASS OF THE BANK ONLY TO FIND THE MIRE OF THE BOTTOM SLIPPING BENEATH HIS SCRAMBLING FEET...EVEN AS HOT REPTILIAN BREATH SPRAYED OVER HIM, ABOVE HIS OWN SCREAMS, HE COULD HEAR JOHN KIMA'S FADING WORDS...

...SINCE FROM NOW ON, I'M USING OUTSIDERS ONLY!!



IT'S AS I SAID, MR. DOUGLAS... WITH YOUR HELP I'M CHANGING THE WAYS OF MY PEOPLE! THEY'LL CEASE DYING OUT FROM SACRIFICES...



HAHAHAHA... IT APPEARS DOUGLAS IS MORE SELF-SACRIFICING THAN I THOUGHT! NOW, BEFORE THE SWAMP GOD PUTS THE BITE ON HIM, WHY DON'T YOU NIBBLE AT MY NEXT GOODIE?



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READY FOR A CHANGE OF PACE, FELLOW- FIENDSTERS?
LET'S SEE IF I CAN'T ARRANGE FOR YOU TO FACE
THE BROODING MENACE OF...



Gene Colan

THE CHANGELING!

IT WAS LATE AFTERNOON, BUT DARKNESS
HAD ALREADY OVERTAKEN MUCH OF THE
AGING MANSION'S INTERIOR, ADDING TO
THE SINISTER EFFECT OF ITS RAMBLING
ARCHITECTURE. FOR THE FIRST TIME
SINCE LEAVING BOSTON, RACHEL MEREDITH
WAS HAVING REGRETS...

THE BUTLER USHERED
RACHEL INTO THE LIBRARY SHADOWS
CAST BY THE FLICKERING FLAMES OF
THE FIREPLACE. ADDED ONE MORE
MACABRE TOUCH TO THE OLD BUILDING'S
GLOOM. COLD EYES PEERED BALEFULLY
AT HER FROM UNDER THE DARK BROW
OF THE MAN FACING HER...

THIS WAY, MISS.
MR. HAZELTINE'S
BEEN WAITING...

ALL THOSE
STARES FROM
THE TOWNSPEOPLE
WHEN I SAID I
WAS COMING HERE
...SMALL WONDER
I'M NERVOUS!

I'M EMMETT HAZELTINE,
MISS MEREDITH. WELCOME TO MY
HOUSE. MY LAWYER GAVE YOU A
GLOWING RECOMMENDATION...
I'M SURE YOU'LL BE A FINE GOVERN-
ESS FOR THE BOY.

T-THANK YOU,
MR. HAZELTINE...
I HOPE YOUR
WIFE AND
SON THINK
SO TOO. I
CERTAINLY WILL
TR---



EMMETT HAZELTINE'S FACE GREW DARKER...

NO ONE TOLD YOU? MY WIFE'S BEEN IN AN ASYLUM SINCE JUST AFTER GIVING BIRTH... INCURABLY INSANE! WHAT THE BOY THINKS DOESN'T MATTER!

I'M SORRY... I-I DIDN'T KNOW... BUT IT'S IMPOR-
TANT THAT THE CHILD AND I GET ALONG, OR ELSE...

THAT'S BETWEEN YOU AND HIM! MY WORK HERE IN THE LIBRARY DEMANDS ALL MY TIME... IT'S ESSENTIAL! HANDLE THE BOY AS YOU WILL!

THIS TIME OF DAY, HE'S USUALLY IN THE GARDEN... BY THE POND, LATHROP WILL SHOW YOU THE WAY!

HAZELTINE FACED HIS BOOK SHELVES SHUTTING RACHEL OUT WITHOUT CHANCE OF REPLY. THE BUTLER APPEARED AND LEAD HER TO THE BACK OF THE HOUSE, OUTSIDE INTO THE FADING-SUNLIGHT.

MASTER DONALD! MASTER DONALD, I'VE BROUGHT MISS MEREDITH, YOUR NEW GOVERNESS...

WHAT'S BEHIND YOUR BACK? WHAT ARE YOU HIDING?

NOTHING, LATHROP...

RACHEL FELT HERSELF AT ONCE IMPRESSED AND REPELLED BY THE BOY, NEAT AND HANDSOME, YET SOMEHOW DISTANT AND REMOVED, HIS DELICATE FEATURED FACE AN IMMOBILE MASK. AS THEY APPROACHED, DONALD BROUGHT HIS HAND OUT FROM BEHIND HIS BACK...

...NOTHING BUT THIS!

DEAR LORD! IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN KILLED BY SOME KIND OF... A-ANIMAL!

FLUSHED WITH ANGER, THE BUTLER SPRANG FORWARD SENDING THE MUTILATED CARCASS FLYING FROM THE CHILD'S GRIP...

YOU LITTLE MONSTER!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR TRICKS! TIME YOU LEARNED A LESSON...

NO, MR. LATHROP!

AS LONG AS I'M GOVERNESS, YOU'RE NEVER TO LAY A HAND TO THIS BOY! ANY CHILD'S NATURALLY CURIOUS ABOUT DEATH... THAT'S WHY HE HAD IT!



RACHEL TOOK THE BOY TO HIS ROOM, THEN BURST INTO THE LIBRARY OUTRAGED AND ANNOYED, REPEATING THE INCIDENT TO THE BROODING MASTER OF HAZELTINE HOUSE...

IT'S NOTHING TO ME, MISS MEREDITH! WHERE THE BOY'S CONCERNED LATHROP WILL OBEY YOUR WISHES! NOW IF YOU'RE

DONE DISTURBING MY RESEARCH...

VERY WELL, MISS, WE'LL SEE... SEE HOW YOU FEEL WHEN YOU HEAR ABOUT THE FIRST GOVERNESS!

JUST ONE MORE THING, MR. HAZELTINE... ANOTHER WOMAN HAD MY JOB. WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?



HAZELTINE'S LARGE, STRONG HANDS BROUGHT HIS BOOK SHUT WITH A LOUD SNAP, RACHEL COULD NOT BE SURE IF IT WERE THE MAN'S JORDS OR THE BOOK'S TITLE THAT SENT A SHIVER THROUGH HER...

SHE WAS KILLED, MISS MEREDITH!

BY SOME MANNER OF WILD ANIMAL THE AUTHORITIES SEEMED TO THINK...



THE CHILL OF FORBODING STAYED WITH HER THROUGH THE EVENING, UNTIL BEDTIME...

I'M NOT SORRY ABOUT THE CAT, IT SCRATCHED ME ONCE. I'M GLAD IT WAS KILLED, BUT HAVING SOMEONE TAKE MY PART WAS NICE... NO ONE EVER DID IT BEFORE!

DON'T WORRY, DONALD. I'M HERE TO HELP WHENEVER I CAN... NOW YOU SHOULD BE GOING TO SLEEP...



RACHEL PAUSED AT THE WINDOW. THE GARDEN BELOW WAS A DARK MASS OF SHRUBBERY AND SHADOWS! THE FINE HAIR ON THE BACK OF HER NECK SUDDENLY TINGLED. FOR AN INSTANT, ONE OF THE SHADOWS SEEMED TO MOVE, THEN MELT INTO THE DARKNESS...

I-I MUST BE TIRED...THE STRAIN OF THE FIRST DAY...

THE NIGHT'S STRANGENESS FADED INTO MORNING AND THE FIRST OF HER TUTORING

WITH DONALD...

WEARILY SHE RETURNED TO HER OWN ROOM. RACHEL COULD NOT BE SURE, BUT AS HER HEAVY EYELIDS CLOSED THERE SEEMED TO BE A FAINT SHUFFLING SOUND IN THE HALL, PAUSING, THEN MOVING ALONG PAST, DOWN TO, TOWARD THE ROOMS OF THE OTHER SERVANTS...

DONALD! DONALD! HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO LEARN HISTORY WHILE STARING OUT THAT WINDOW?

THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON...SOMETHING IN THE GARDEN!

IT'S HAPPENED AGAIN! IT'S HAPPENED AGAIN!

GOD HELP US!
IT'S LATHROP!
LIKE THE HOUND OF THE HELL HAD RUN 'IM TO EARTH!



RACHEL STARTED, TRANSFIXED WITH HORROR, THEN SLOWLY NOTICED A CHILLING SOUND... A SOFT CHILDISH SNICKER...

DONALD!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
STOP IT! A MAN'S
DIED OUT
THERE...

ONLY
LATHROP,
NASTY OLD
LATHROP!
I HATED
HIM, AND HE
HATED ME...
EVERYONE
HATES ME...

THAT'S A
TERRIBLE
THING TO
SAY... IT'S
NOT TRUE!
WHAT ABOUT
ME? WHAT
ABOUT YOUR
FATHER?

HE'S **WORSE**
THAN LATHROP.
WORSE THAN
ANYONE...
YOU'RE THE
ONLY ONE
WHO DOESN'T
MISS
MEREDITH...
THE ONLY ONE!

RACHEL WANTED TO CONTRADICT THE TERRIBLE ACCUSATION OF THE SMALL SOLEMN FACE, BUT THERE WAS NO WAY. DONALD'S WORDS WEIGHED HEAVILY ON HER UNTIL EVENING WHEN SHE COULD STAND IT NO MORE...

MR. HAZELTINE, I'VE
GOT TO SPEAK TO YOU
ABOUT DONALD...
NOW!

THERE'S NO
NEED, AFTER
WHAT'S HAP-
PENED TO LATHROP,
EVERY OTHER SERVANT'S
QUIT... I SEE NO
REASON FOR YOU TO
STAY ON!

NO REASON?
WHAT ABOUT
YOUR SON?
YOUR OWN
SON!

I HAD
HOPED TO
HAVE A SOLUTION
BEFORE NOW, BE-
FORE ANOTHER
DEATH... BUT IT'S
NOT EASY... SO MANY
BOOKS, SO LITTLE
TIME...

BOOKS?!

YOU SPEND YOUR
DAYS LOOKING FOR
ANSWERS AMID THIS
JUNGLE OF WITCHCRAFT
AND SORCERY? FOR THAT
YOU NEGLECT YOUR
OWN SON?

**STOP
CALLING HIM
MY SON!**
I KNOW THAT
LITTLE HORROR
FOR WHAT HE IS!

A CHANGELING, MISS MEREDITH! DO YOU KNOW OF THEM? SPAWN OF THE DEVIL'S CREATURES, LEFT IN THE CRADLE IN EXCHANGE FOR HUMAN INFANTS... MY CHILD WAS STOLEN, AND THIS... LEFT IN HIS PLACE!

WHY ELSE DO YOU THINK MY WIFE WENT MAD?!

THE PURE FURY OF THE EMMETT HAZELTINE'S WORDS HIT RACHEL LIKE Mallet STROKES. SHE BACKED SLOWLY FROM THE ROOM...

BUT SOME- DAY I'LL FIND IT... THE SPELL, THE CURSE, THE MEANS TO DESTROY HIM... TO SEND HIM BACK TO THE PIT FROM WHICH HE CAME!

DEAR LORD! HE'S INSANE... COMPLETELY INSANE!

SHE FLED THE LIBRARY, RACING UP FLIGHTS OF THE DARK, CREAKING STAIRS...

DONALD! WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP?

NOISE WOKE ME... I HEARD VOICES... SHOUTING!

DONALD, DEAR, LISTEN TO ME... IT ISN'T SAFE HERE ANY LONGER! YOUR FATHER'S NOT WELL... I'VE GOT TO GET YOU AWAY...

YES... I THINK I'M READY TO LEAVE NOW!

NO! DEAR GOD, NO! THIS TIME IT'S NOT NERVES...

DONALD... LET'S GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM...

THE MOON- LIGHT OUTSIDE THE OPEN LANDING WINDOW SOMEHOW PULLED RACHEL'S EYES, A DEATHLY QUIET HUNG OVER THE MANSION AND DARKENED GARDEN... THEN RACHEL HEARD THE SOUND...

THIS WAS NO SLEEP-FOGGED DELUSION. NOW SHE COULD HEAR THE DOOR FROM THE GARDEN, THEN AGAIN THE SHUFFLING... SLITHERING... NOW INSIDE!

O-DONALD, I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD BE OUT HERE... LET'S...

COME ON, MISS MEREDITH, THIS WAY...

FROM THE YAWNING BLACK DEPTHS OF THE STAIRWAY, MORE SOUNDS DRIFTED UP... WOOD SPLINTERING AND CRACKING AS THE LIBRARY DOOR GAVE WAY!

DONALD! DON'T GO DOWN THERE! GET BACK! DONALD...

COME ON, WE WANT TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON... COME ON, MISS MEREDITH!

THE GLOW OF THE KEROSENE LAMP CREPT SURELY DOWN THE WINDING FLIGHTS AND DISAPPEARED IN THE VICINITY OF THE LIBRARY. SECONDS LATER, THE DARKNESS WAS SPLIT BY SHRIeking HORROR!

DONALD! OH, MY GOD... DONALD!

HALF-RUNNING, HALF-FALLING, RACHEL DESCENDED THE STAIRS ONLY TO FREEZE IN MADDENING TERROR AT THE MACABRE TABLEAU BEFORE HER, AS SOUNDS AND ODORS OF UNEARTHLY CARNAGE STUNNED HER REMAINING SENSES.



THEN, AS THOUGH ONLY A NIGHTMARE INSTEAD OF THIS PHANTASMAGORIC REALITY, SHE RACED FORWARD FOR THE BOY, HOPING STILL TO SAVE HIM...

DONALD! LISTEN TO ME! COME BACK! COME BA---

THE LAMP! YOU'VE DROPPED THE LAMP!

HE SHRUGGED FREE SENDING RACHEL REELING BACKWARD AS THE LAMP HIT THE CARPETING AND SCATTERED BOOKS... ABOVE THE CRACKLING FLAMES AND HAZELTINE'S SCREAMS, SHE COULD HEAR THE GROWING GIGGLE OF THE BOY...



THE LIBRARY BECAME AN INFERNO WHICH WOULD SOON SPREAD TO THE ENTIRE HOUSE, AND THE DANCING SHADOWS OF ITS FLAMES ALL BUT DROVE RACHEL MAD. AS SHE SANK INTO OBLIVION, DONALD'S LAUGHTER GREW TO A WORD SHOUTED OVER AND OVER... THE NAME OF THE LOATHSOME THING CLAWING AND DESTROYING HAZELTINE...

MEN FROM THE VILLAGE FOUND HER THE NEXT MORNING SPRAWLED ON THE LAWN OF WHAT ONCE HAD BEEN HAZELTINE HOUSE... INSIDE, THEY FOUND THE CHARRED REMAINS OF EMMETT HAZELTINE, NOTHING MORE!

SHE'S GONNA BE OKAY... LITTLE DELIRIOUS NOW, BUT SHE'LL BE OKAY...

...THAT'S WHAT HE CALLED IT... THAT THING... HE CALLED IT... MOTHER!

SO! DONALD HAD A PRETTY HOT TIME AT HIS FAMILY REUNION... LIKE ALL MOTHERS, HIS TENDED TO BE OVERPROTECTIVE... AS MR. HAZELTINE FOUND OUT! AND YOU'LL FIND OUT THERE'S MORE MONSTROUS MAYHEM AWAITING YOU WHEN YOU PICK UP ISSUE NUMBER 7 OF **EBERIE!**





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